

Council chief quits shortly before the outcome of air quality report

A COUNCIL director in charge of Waverley's environment services has announced his imminent departure from the council - just weeks before the results of an audit into Waverley's botched air quality report is due.

Dannien Roberts, Waverley Borough Council's strategic director of front line services - including a responsibility for air quality - is leaving in the new year to take up a new role as chief operating officer at

Epsom and Ewell Council.

It comes just weeks after council chiefs confessed to using an incorrect bias correction factor in calculating Waverley's 2016 Annual Air Quality Status Report, and commissioned a 'comprehensive audit' of its air quality monitoring and reporting arrangements.

One of three directors heading Waverley services, together with Tom Horwood, newly appointed interim managing director, and Graeme Clark, strate-

gic director of finance and resources, Mr Roberts was responsible for leading Waverley's environment, housing, leisure and community services, including the council's house building programme, economic development, family support service, and employment skills training service.

In a letter of thanks to councillors, Mr Roberts wrote: "I am of course very sad to be leaving Waverley at such an important and exciting time, and I know

that despite the huge challenges we face as a local authority, the council is certainly heading in the right direction, tackling the issues that matter most, and doing so with sound leadership at both member and officer level."

• Waverley has confirmed all planning applications granted since May 2017 "could potentially be impacted" if its latest air quality report is proved to be erroneous.

Waverley's environment

officers routinely comment on planning applications based on the council's published reports, and the council is reviewing planning applications amid fears incorrect data may have affected decisions.

A Waverley spokesman said: "It is our understanding that comments made on planning applications from May 2017 could potentially be impacted. We need to understand what applications have been commented on and review

the comments made. This will be considered as part of the audit we are conducting.

"The audit will also identify if errors were made and if so where the responsibility for them lies. We are not in a position to speculate at this time."

However, the spokesman denied any concerns over decisions taken prior to May 2017, including the various planning consents granted for the Brightwells regeneration scheme.